

Diversity

Poems and reflections by young writers

Edited by Théophile Munyangayo and Marion Lines



First published 2010 by:

Leeds Met Press
Leeds Metropolitan University
Old School Board
Calverley Street
Leeds LS1 3ED

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-907240-12-6

Designed and typeset by Suneet Morley, Leeds Metropolitan University,
Graphics Team.

Printed in the UK by Angus Print Ltd

Foreword

Adults who think that children's minds gravitate around the world of fantasies, a world shaped by spooky stories or tales of mystifying superheroes, are wrong. In this book, the way that children – as healers and change agents – see the world and their communities, with all their ills and hopes, shared experiences and needs, leaves us as readers thirsty to learn more about diversity and difference.

While official diversity and equality policies are designed to combat prejudice and discrimination, these young writers, through their genuine emotional expression, focus on difference in a very specific way. They analyse it, shifting its meaning to one where everyone in the community is seen as different and bringing a set of traits and experiences that enrich our social fabric. For these young writers, diversity matters in a community's daily life. They believe that differences based on race, ethnicity and language actually highlight the importance of diversity in shaping our own identities, developing awareness of others and fostering interpersonal communication.

There is much in this book to inspire social policy-makers as they strive to reinforce the message that unity in diversity underpins social solidarity. We often perceive the concept of diversity purely within an egalitarian context; this collection challenges that view with a call to celebrate all that makes us different.

These poems and reflections are exciting and intense! The writing competition which stimulated pupils to produce these poems and reflections has clearly set their imaginations free and honed their abilities to express their thoughts with clarity. Wherever their future plans lie, there can be no doubt that their critical thinking and writing talents will blossom. It behoves us all to help these gifted pupils nurture their talents so that they bloom in all their diversity.



Professor Susan Price
Vice Chancellor
Leeds Metropolitan University

Introduction

Modern societies are becoming more and more diverse. The competitive labour market of the global economy is generating new patterns of migration and the population growth is creating ethnically and linguistically diverse communities, profoundly changing the face of traditional homogenous communities.

Language contact, as a result of migration, is creating a sociolinguistic environment in which individuals and communities are exposed to multilingualism. It seems inconceivable to think of a monolingual community. Thus, the need to recognise and value differences becomes the equality norm.

Equality is all about making sure that everyone is treated fairly and given the same life opportunities. It is about creating a fairer system that allows people to genuinely and proudly express their self-identity in a society that is tolerant.

Looking beyond different forms of discrimination based on collective characteristics, such as colour, faith, language and demographic identity, the authors get insight into these diversity patterns to form new identities that foster and cherish the true meaning of being different.

The acceptance and promotion of multilingualism and ethnic and cultural differences should be informed by the understanding and valuing of the dynamics of diversity with the aim of ensuring equality. It is by raising awareness of the need to understand each other's differences that the authors seek to embrace them and celebrate their pride at being united in diversity. In this book, these young writers with very sharp minds join their voices for an equal and diverse society.

Diversity comprises a selection of texts by young people aged 11 – 17 on their views of themselves and others in a multicultural society. These reflections were submitted as entries for a writing competition involving Leeds Metropolitan University partner schools. We are grateful to the Routes into Languages project for sponsoring this initiative.

Théophile Munyangayo and Marion Lines
Leeds Metropolitan University

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Chapter 1: Learning languages – I love it

The message of this chapter is one you might be surprised to read in your morning paper: the future for languages is bright! So accustomed have we become to statistics indicating a mass exodus from languages in our schools that we could be forgiven for thinking that we are raising a generation with no interest in language. Enough of reading what others have to say; here, you will read the words of the students themselves. Aged from 11 – 17, our authors express an enthusiasm for languages that defies the newspaper headlines.

It is excellent news that students at our partner schools can communicate in a wide variety of languages, with the learning experience in the classroom extending beyond European languages. This is in line with the experience at Leeds Metropolitan University, where there is a regular demand for classes in over 20 languages. What's more, there is evidence that our authors are acquiring language skills from a wide range of sources, including lessons, private study and friends and family.

The following pages have been filled by young people with such enthusiasm for languages that they are prepared to write about it. We hope you find their words inspirational.

But in French I shine

I look around the room,
take in the sea of faces,
different cultures, different races
all from different places.

We speak the same, but in French I shine,
because of all the time
I spend in France with the sun on my back,
my back to England, my back to English.

My first day at school I couldn't speak a word,
I felt so alone, I couldn't make a friend,
but then the sun broke through the clouds!
I learnt to speak, I learnt to sing!

Now my friends all ask me for help,
and I know if I did the same, they'd say yes.
I can't believe how lucky I am,
to live in a world with so much things to learn.

I've known my friends for what seems like forever,
but still so much to learn about their culture so different to mine,
so get out there and learn!

Learn the colours of the flags!
Learn a different language!
Learn a way in which to be
at one with all the community!

Learn to sing and dance and act!
Learn to call a bird!
Learn to paint and laugh and be
as happy as you can be!

Go out and learn!
Go out and shine!

Emma Helliwell (13)
Bradford Academy, 1st prize

Without languages, society falls

A lot of people at my school ask me why it is that I do languages, generally in an attempt to make fun of me trying to better myself by accepting the languages of others, and ask me why I'm not doing a 'worthwhile' subject, like DT. Now, I'm not sure if it's just me, but which seems more worthwhile to you, learning vocabulary to be able to understand and communicate with people beyond the small group of islands we live on, or gluing one piece of wood to another to make a pretty box which will most likely lie forgotten and unused somewhere in the attic? I'm not getting at people who do DT (aside from the person who keeps telling me to stop "wasting my time" with French...), but I cannot see how learning languages can be anything but beneficial. Granted, it's strenuous, but virtually any subject is, and the one factor that affects the difference between them is your own desire to do the subject, and in my case, my passion is languages.

Perhaps I'm the one who's wrong, perhaps we are just meant to stay at home, staying as far away from anyone beyond Britain as possible, and leaving ourselves isolated, but I don't honestly care if I'm wrong for it or not. Without languages, society falls. We can't arrange business meetings, hold important government debates, and holidays would be virtually impossible! You're a lot more likely to find a receptionist at an Italian hotel who speaks Italian than you are to find one who speaks fluent English, and even if you find one, that doesn't mean that every single other person that you meet in Italy will. To be fair, I don't speak Italian either, but if I ever choose to go to Italy, I will at least take some time to learn a bit of the language, even if it's just the set phrases they give you in the dictionary.

A lot of the time, I'd say that the French or German we learned up to Year 9 is sufficient to at least get by in a foreign country (well, at least those who speak French and German, and you may only be able to remember how to say "Ich habe am dreizehnten Juli Geburtstag" which isn't likely to get you anywhere) but unless you can truly get to grips with a language, it's not going to be of any use. People in France aren't going to be speaking slowly and clearly in the same six voices used over and over again for different exercises, so getting a good understanding of quickly spoken foreign language is essential, because without it, we needn't bother doing anything at all with our lives.

I'm hard pressed to find a job where languages have no role whatsoever, yet people find it simple to just pretend they're going to find one regardless, so all I can say is good luck to them, it's going to be hard.

Joseph Golding (17)

Ermysted's Grammar School for Boys, 6th prize

After Spanish, then came French

It's the start of a brand new day,
I'm ready to learn, not to play,
Because I'm finally learning Spanish
I got my wish!
“¡Hola!” they say. “How are you?”
“Fine,” I reply, “*adios* to you.”

After Spanish, then came French
And soldiers once spoke it in a trench.
“*Bonjour*,” they'd greet, “how are you?”
“Not well,” I'd say, “*au revoir* to you.”

All of a sudden I came to realise
I spoke other languages. What a SURPRISE!
So, it seemed, my wish did indeed come true
And now I know just what to do:

Enter a competition and be the best,
And also do well in the multilingual test!

Jamie Douglas (14)
David Young Community Academy

Languages give us a good start

Languages are neat
A good educational start
At a slow and steady pace
Nurture it from your heart
Generally just try your best
Use a phrase book if need be
And concentrate in peace and harmony
Good work can be achieved like this
Everyone can write poetry
So sit, learn and give it a go, just like me.

Macaulay Ingram (14)
David Young Community Academy

Inspiration

I enjoy learning languages at school and exploring different cultures when I go on holiday. It boosts my confidence and inspires me. Once I met an African person and I was mesmerised by the way he talked. The government makes us learn languages because they are encouraging students from different cultures to talk and exchange ideas. I met an Asian person and he made me want to learn languages so I wouldn't feel embarrassed and ignorant about not being able to reply. I am inspired by Martin Luther King because he says "I have a dream" and this message implies to me: don't let anything stop you. Everyone has the right of equality and respect. It is good that people encourage language learning because languages have been passed down and keep being passed down.

Lewis Harrison (13)
Minsthorpe Community College

Chinese

Chinese
Has good points
Is very different. I will
Need to use it if I
Ever go to China. I hope to go
Soon and
Enjoy talking their language.

Aidan Leach (13)
St Bede's Catholic Grammar School

A passage into the minds of others

It was once said by Tolkien that Esperanto and all other international auxiliary languages were “dead and far deader than ancient unused languages, because their authors never invented Esperanto legends”. As an avid reader of mythology and an Esperantist, I am both puzzled by this comment and feel it is rather off-hand: does our society really snub off all languages and cultures which do not have a fulfilling story associated with them?

Admittedly, it is these cultural stories which do grant accessibility early on into different cultures – an early learner of, say, French can quite easily read up in their own language about Molière and instantly feel closer to French society. Furthermore, these stories can give insight both to individuals and even shape other cultures entirely: Virgil is said to have drawn inspiration from Homer, and the era of Elizabethan literature stems from Italian roots. The art of storytelling is one so common to people from all races and creeds, but it is the exchange of these which seems to tie each of us together.

Through an exchange of these tales and reading them in our own tongue, we can often be inspired to delve further into the works of a culture and even take up a whole new language. That is to say, what seemed to be a dry textual translation for monolingualists is suddenly a beacon calling to multilingualism! From personal experience, I can confirm that even if a translation gives us an overview of the original text, its beauty is by far only a scratch on the surface: Latin poetry, for one, is much more striking in its original forms, and I am even inspired to take up Hebrew on hearing that the psalms are of incomparable splendour when in their native tongue.

Esperanto, in a way, can be the key to so many of these experiences; Esperanto is a key to so many cultures and we just have to be ready to accept that. An anthology put together by Marjorie Boulton collates creation stories, parables, historical accounts and stories of all sorts together in Esperanto and shows the way into so many cultures – does it really matter that she did not create a unique Esperanto hero when she had so many from all over the world? As my Esperanto pen reminds me with the slogan written on it: “Speak Esperanto, Speak to the World” – here it seems truly appropriate that (although its original purpose was to stand as a neutral language and render others obsolete, promoting monolingualism) Esperanto really does lend itself to multilingualism and indeed multiculturalism.

Michael Loy (16)

Ermysted's Grammar School for Boys

So proud

I was inspired to learn a language when I went abroad and heard the tour guides speaking fluently in the language of the country and English as well. I thought to myself: I want to be able to do that. You also learn a lot about the people and how their communities are different from ours. Also it's an amazing experience to be able to learn a language and at the end of it you feel so proud of yourself.

I am studying French and Spanish at school and I find the lessons very enjoyable. When I watch films, sometimes they speak a different language and I recognise words or little phrases and think, oh my, I know what he's saying.

I think I might study a language when I go to university because when I try to get a job people are looking for language qualifications. You feel proud of yourself at the end of it.

Megan Manson (12)
Holy Trinity Senior School

Spanish and Mandarin

I enjoy learning Spanish and Mandarin and I learn something new every lesson. Knowing Spanish is great because I go to Spain a lot. I would love to go to China and see what their culture is like. I would be interested to find out if the children in China learn English and if they find it as complicated as I find Mandarin.

Sarah Marston (13)
David Young Community Academy

Think about the power of the word

Survival depends on working hard
Friendship is kept alive through talking to each other
Conflicts are resolved through mediation
Pain can heal when shared
Knowledge takes over ignorance when questions are answered
Learning takes place when experiences are shared
Wisdom is passed on through tale telling
Now think ...
Think about missing job opportunities due to lack of language skills
Think about living solo
Just because you cannot talk to make friends
Think about being unable to apologise for your wrongdoings
Just because you do not speak their language
Think about suffering in silence while surrounded by millions
Just because you do not know what to say to seek help
Think about being enslaved by darkness
Just because you can not ask a question in the master's language
Think about failing to ask how they do things in their homeland
Just because you do not speak their language
Think about being unable to share sweet stories with your grandfather
Just because you do not speak your parents' language
Think...

Thierry Ngutegure (17)

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College

Through an exchange of tales

Languages are, to me, the single greatest innovation that mankind has ever developed. Without them, nothing that we have in the modern world would exist – computers, televisions – even cars. Language is, put simply, the greatest tool that we have ever used. No superlative is enough to encompass the broad reaches of language and its richness. The effects of tongues can be seen everywhere that we look. Even as I write this I am listening to an album which includes songs in Latin, Irish and English; I am writing this on a piece of software called ‘Word’; I am able to read through what I have written. Languages are God – they are omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. How? Languages are everywhere that we look, as I have already detailed. They are omnipotent as words can bring down Governments, start a revolution, end a war or write a document on the importance of language. Finally, language is omniscient as all known things are thought about using words and therefore language includes all things.

However, this is not what language means to me. “He who is ignorant of other languages is ignorant of his own,” says Goethe and this is, I think, the crux of why people need languages to understand other people. Without knowledge of who you are, you cannot even begin to contemplate understanding others! Languages are a passage into the mind of others. Languages have personalities that reflect the people who speak them. This is part of what attracted me to learn French. I have only been lucky enough to journey thither thrice and as a result I have had little contact with the French people and their culture. However, through my studies of the French language, I feel that I now know more about France than I do about any other country save England. French has allowed me to access all aspects of the French heritage that would otherwise be beyond my reach from Yorkshire. The language has enriched my life and broadened my mind.

My personal views on multilingualists have also stemmed from the same root. I believe that as many people as possible should try to learn a second language up to a high standard. It is almost an insult to go abroad without learning some useful phrases in the local language. It makes me shudder whenever I hear people moaning about how difficult it was to get themselves understood when abroad, and I think to myself, “Why not try talking in their language rather than your own?” It is an unfortunate trait of the English to do this in my experience, and it is one that we must quickly rid ourselves of, before everyone else decides to stop learning English to give us a taste of our own medicine! Monolingualists should be forced to stay within English-speaking countries until they have learned another language. For me, languages are special, and people need to be careful how they use them. But they also have to use them more often.

Robert Skilleter (16)
Ermysted’s Grammar School for Boys

No use waiting

I used to sit in school dreaming about exploring the world and meeting new people. I'm proud of my dreams: they helped me to become the person I am today. Now I have more enthusiasm than to wait for the world to come to me. There's no use waiting. The world needs to be unlocked and my thoughts, dreams and actions are the key to uncover the wonders of the world. Languages are the path to follow to a brighter future.

Emily Waldron (13)
Minsthorpe Community College

Chapter 2: The place I call home

All the authors in this section have moved to Britain at some point during their childhood. The fact that they have emigrated before adulthood is significant and two factors of such a move are highlighted in their writing. First, the young people themselves have not made the decision to seek a new home and many find it difficult to justify the move in their own minds. Second, they are still developing their self-identity and their response to cultural differences may be different from the response of the adult members of their families.

They write with feeling about what they have left behind, whether that be a childhood idyll or a place of conflict. Emotional support is important to them and both family and friends play a vital role in their old and new lives. The conflict between hopes and fears is clearly expressed and our young writers face the future with strength, confidence and determination.

My new home, my new hope!

I was born in a country with scars of war
Where the sunset sets over the hills
Rich in honey and milk
A beautiful country but with a very sad fate
Politicians say they are doing all they can
But the cries and misery never end
All we can do is hope and pray
Now I dream a dream that I am free
No more chains can hold me down
I was lost but now I am found
People may say this is another world I came from
And it is far away so why care
My dream of a better day is still vivid
The utopia of my dreams
Far from hatred and close to my friends
Is put to the test whenever I see people suffering
When I open my eyes and I go back to the past
I see the pain and misery blurring my eyes
In my new home I have a dream of new hope
Help me defend its values of brotherhood in diversity
Help me turn my dreams of hope
Into hopes and real feelings
All together as one
No matter how different we can be
Let us sing the song of unity
Our differences, whether colour or languages,
Should actually be a source of strength we need
To make my new home a place of hope.

Samile Kizere (16)

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, 4th prize

A new world

“One step, one breath of air
So windy, I had to hold my hair
The cold reached from my head to my toes
It even froze my clothes
The feeling of being there
I told my mother it wasn't fair
New school new start of life
My dad said he's glad he has a new wife
I just don't see the point of moving away
To a new country, not getting your way
I started to moan
I'll miss my family and friends back home
And then it was night
Everyone's asleep
But I sat up and wept
What am I supposed to say?
When first I came to England I was terrified
New life, new culture, new school, new everything
Every time I looked into the skies I see no stars.
My country Nigeria was amazing
Always hot with the sun shining.
Children playing in the sun
Having so much fun
Full of sparkling stars.
Nigeria was the most fantastic home
Don't you wish you were back where you belong?
Day and night you wait so long
Waiting and waiting day by day
This is all I have to say.”

Naomi Becker (12)
David Young Community Academy

I just can't speak it any more

My mother talking French, Spanish, Urdu, Tamil and Hindi and my father speaking most Indian languages has had a major impact on me. Born in Reunion, I started to get Creole French into my brain, though after a year I was hurled into India. Here I began to pick up Urdu and I could start to write and speak the language. At this time I could speak a bit of English, like the occasional 'hello' and 'how are you'. All around me I could hear Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and many more languages being spoken. My brain was stating to settle into those languages and less of English. In India I had frequent trips to England, which I thought were mere holidays, but I was soon to find that I was going to live there.

I lived in Scunthorpe at first, where I had to sharpen my English skills drastically; my other languages were of no use to me so were slowly forgotten. Here I saw many ethnicities, but most were unsurprisingly English. My friends from different backgrounds had already forgotten their home language and could only speak English now. I wondered if I would ever become like them.

In England I was moved round to many towns and am now at my 7th school. Moving to all these schools and towns has made me accustomed to the different ethnicities and languages being spoken, but for me English meant more forgotten languages. Right now I can speak only English fluently. At school I am learning French, German and Latin, the foundation of most languages. At home my mother is speaking French to try and improve my knowledge of it. Urdu, however, has been forgotten: I can understand when other people speak it but I just can't speak it any more. My dad is trying to get me to speak it again by talking it non-stop at home. Recently I have found an interest in Spanish, so I am starting to learn it with the help of my mother who took languages as her course at university. Sadly she has nearly forgotten the language as well. The number of languages at home is just overwhelming.

I don't know where language is going to take me in the future, but I am sure it will be a big part of it.

Omar Imran (12)

Ermysted's Grammar School for Boys

I found a new home

As I go down the street
Am surprised at what I meet
Lots of different faces of all different races

Crowded streets, busy roads
Trucks filled with heavy loads
Shops filled with different goods
And the aroma of delicious food

First day at school
Feeling super cool
A girl asks me if I'm new
But I stand there like a fool

I forgot about my past
And all my trouble at last
I found a new home
Where there shall never be a storm!

Tariro Jera (12)

David Young Community Academy

Diversity inside my head

I was born in Rwanda, grew up in the country of '*la bonne cuisine*' (France) and am completing my studies in England. I have experienced three different cultures so I feel as if I am belonging to every one of them. I consider myself as Rwandese, French and English at the same time. How could this be possible? Is it the languages?

By looking back I come up with thoughts that allow me to elucidate this diversity in my mind. I see myself as a French citizen, not only because I possess the French nationality but also because, for nine years, I began my day with crusty baguette and pain au chocolat. I used to recite French poems such as *La cigale et la fourmi* and we performed the French play *L'Avare* at school. On the other hand, I consider myself Rwandese even though I didn't live there. Outside my French education where I learned the history of France and to sing '*La Marseillaise*', I was taught specific movements of Rwandese dance and wore traditional clothes. I was even beginning to ask for the meaning of my name Ishimwe ('Thanks to God'). At a wedding, I observed Rwandese customs, such as offering a cow to the newly married couple. In this way, step by step, I was maturing in two cultures.

Coming to England was the biggest challenge that I have ever been through. I didn't know the language and had this constant fear of not being understood. I remember the first time I was interacting with 'the English', it was a bus driver. I was with my sister and showed my bus pass and gave the money to the bus driver, but I struggled to ask for a 'full day ticket'. At the end, a nod from the bus driver was sufficient to indicate that he had understood me. Body language was the alternative way of expressing my ideas. Identifying a way of communicating gave me the confidence and the determination to improve my English. Despite the rocky situations that I had to overcome, I feel the effort was rewarding as it has opened up my mind and enhanced this diversity inside my head.

Lise Pascale Ishimwe Nzabamwita (17)
Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College

Chapter 3: United in diversity

The concept of diversity literally refers to difference. When it is associated with equality, it seeks the recognition and the value of individual as well as group differences. It is in this regard that communities and institutions in modern societies are committed to engage with creating and promoting a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and celebrate differences. Such initiatives are a core element in promoting an inclusive culture, a call to unite for diversity.

The authors of the texts in the following chapter are proudly celebrating unity in diversity, the hallmark of European citizenship. It is clear that these young writers understand very well that no matter how different we are, “we come together”, “U and I are just the same”, and we should celebrate whatever makes us different.

I started to know the difference

When I was born in Bradford,
I wasn't really to know
That the world I had just arrived in
Had so many cultures to behold.
As I was growing up,
I started to know the difference
Between all my friends and me.
I was only small,
Didn't know a lot at all,
But now I understand, you see.
My first day at school was quite hard for me,
As I didn't know what to do,
Not as hard as it was for my friend,
As she spoke a different language, Urdu.
She used to try to speak as much English as she could,
But she wasn't very good,
Most of the time I couldn't understand her,
I suppose she couldn't understand me either.
I tried to talk to her as much as I could,
So she could understand me and learn English.
As the years went on she was learning more and more,
And one day she did me proud as she accomplished.
She read a book from cover to cover,
Right until the end,
She was also proud of herself,
I was too of course but she still had loads to discover!
Now I was in year six,
It was time to leave my primary school,
That's not all I was leaving behind:
I was leaving behind my best friend.
It was really hard to say goodbye as we were now so combined.
When we finally said goodbye we promised to stay in touch,
Both of us didn't want to leave each other
As we loved each other so much!
We are still in touch
Two years down the line
And have met up with each other a few times.
You see it doesn't matter what race or culture you are,
We are all equal!

Tiffany White (13)
Bradford Academy, 3rd prize

She doesn't speak how I speak

There are ways of talking
That are usually unknown
But can be known

Several people
Wish they knew these languages
When they found out

Hundreds of people
Get confused when someone new
Moves in down the street

I went and tried to
Talk to this person but she
Didn't understand.

I asked my Mum why.
She said, "She doesn't speak how
I speak: let's find out."

Adham Marzouki (13)
David Young Community Academy, 5th prize

Does it matter?

Does it matter what colour skin you have?
Does it matter what language you speak?
Does it matter that what you wear is different?
Does it matter that we're different?

Does it matter we wear different shoes?
Have different hair colour?
Or how you learn?

Things that make us different
Make us more alike.

Cerys Appleton (11)
Minsthorpe Community College

All as one

Growing up in Bradford:
In Bradford there are many different races,
Different religion and different faces,
Different buildings and places of worship,
People making a special friendship.

People living in the same community,
It's easy to create different opportunities,
Everyone lives in perfect harmony,
Let me assure you there is no disharmony.

There's lots of excitement and fun,
It looks like peace has been won,
It's great living in this part of town,
You can now turn that frown upside down.

My experience of this type of living,
Is lots of loving and lots of giving,
We all live together, all as one,
All of us happy under the sun!

Thomas Bailey (13)
Bradford Academy

No one's the same, but no one's above

Lots of different people
All different races
Lots of different people
All from different places

Take a look at what's around you
Helping people on their way
Take a look at what's around you
Help those people every day

No one's the same
But everyone needs love
No one's the same
But no one's above

Zoe Carty (12), Leah Thomas-Scarlett (12) and Georgia Pugh (12)
David Young Community Academy

Hopes and dreams

My world is full of hopes and dreams. What's beyond my town? What's going on as I speak? My experiences I will cherish forever, no matter how far you are from me, I remember what you said.

My world is full of hopes and dreams that one day I will shake hands with a stranger. We'll share our cultures, love one another. If we all join together, we will soon be heard.

No matter where we come from, no matter what we say, there is one thing that will keep us strong. Language is the world. If you don't know the language, just smile and they will know what you are saying. That's where your friendship starts with the world.

My world is full of hopes and dreams. Languages are all around us, but there are no boundaries.

Lauren Cross (13)

Minsthorpe Community College

We come together

I was born and raised in Bradford
A city with lots of places
And everywhere you look or go
There are a lot of races

We may not look or speak the same
But it doesn't matter you see
No matter what you think or say
We are all the same to me

We may not know each other
Like a sister a brother a mother
But if we come together
We could be friends forever

If we all come together
Think of what we could do
We could laugh we could cry
We'd be happy all the time
Now that bit we all know is true

So come on, let's all shout out loud
We are united, happy and proud

Donnalea Fortune (13)
Bradford Academy

Same in different ways

Listen to the languages,
And tell the differences apart,
Notice all the changes,
Groups coming together,
Understand people's culture,
And learning what goes on,
Good and bad come together,
Each miles apart,
Same in different ways.

Jessica Haigh (13)
David Young Community Academy

The same in the way we walk

I speak, it's as if I don't get heard,
I don't know why. Am I a nerd?
They look at me in a very strange way,
I am just normal, but I'm from far away.
Making new friends is weird, I don't know why,
I just want to run away and cry, cry, cry.
They can't understand the way I talk,
But the thing is we are the same in the way we walk.

Beckii Keegan (13)
David Young Community Academy

Happy, equal and free

We live in a certain generation
That is filled with different nations
We all have different celebrations
But we always come together to show our appreciation.

Everyone is different, we are not the same
Even though sometimes we share a name
But we would never play the game
Of bringing each other to shame.

We have different colours, beliefs and speech
And you know it's not everyone who loves their fish,
Chicken, curry, rice and peas,
Some even like a bit of mouldy cheese.

It's amazing how we can all come as one
And still be able to have loads of fun
But remember that everything you do under the sun
Can never be undone.

Look around the world and what do you see
A place of love and peace for you and me
Where we all can easily be
Happy, equal and free.

Beverley Jera (15)
David Young Community Academy

We shouldn't just pass the blame

Bradford's full of different cultures
People may think of them as vultures
People see them as a waste of space
Just because they are a different race
I think this is just absurd
Treating them like an animal herd
I think that they are really cool
I am friends with them at my school
They have rights to live here
Their living conditions should not be severe

I've been abroad on holidays
And all the countries I have to praise
Their languages are so confusing
But that's no excuse for abusing
They have so many good ideas
Like putting food in tortillas
The countries have amazing food
It can come brewed, skewed or even stewed
I learn a language at school
It's an amazing tool

I think we are all the same
We shouldn't just pass the blame

Ethan Strickland (13)
Bradford Academy

Without diversity we would all be clones

Diversity makes us what we are:
Skin colour, language, appearance.
Without diversity we would all be clones,
No personality; no life.
Think of all the people that have achieved great things!
Not all one race, not all one language.
So don't be ashamed of who you are:
Be proud.

Yasmin Walker (11)
Minsthorpe Community College

Chapter 4: Our community

In this chapter, the concept of community is a group of people who live in the same location or who share a certain number of cohesive characteristics. Where the sense of community is embedded in self-identity, freedom, security and collective sustainable development are cherished and the sense of connectedness generates a true social cohesion. However, while community is normally organised around shared values and social identity, the young writers deplore the lack of social connections and common goals and interests in many communities. Although some communities strive for integration, tolerance, mutual respect and fulfilment of needs, some authors feel that the sense of belonging in their communities is undermined by social problems, such as violence, drugs, bullying, vandalism, racism, lawbreakers and many more. Moving away from this depressing image, the pessimistic view fades away when these young writers express their hopes and dreams of a brighter future through individual and collective engagement to foster the sense and spirit of community.

How is your community?

Some communities are gold by nature
But others have been ruined by torture
Some communities seek inclusion
But others have a brand of exclusion
Some communities are proud of diversity
But others are ashamed of their multi-ethnicity
Some communities defend their neighbourhoods
But others destroy themselves masked in hoods
Some communities celebrate many races
But others never smile to new faces
Some communities have dreams they plan to reach
But others have plans for bad lessons to teach
Some communities are learning a new skill
But others are looking for a scapegoat to kill
Some communities envy you when you speak a different language
But others take you as a new burden or extra luggage
Where is the community where friendship is selfless?
Where is the community where they offer more but demand less?
Where is the community where they share all as holy communion?
Where is the community where people strive for a true union?
Where is the community where all races race together?
Where is the community where all faiths, thoughts and races can gather?
If this community does not exist
Then our generation has a task or ceases to exist!

Thierry Ngutegure (17)
Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, 2nd prize

There is more to this place

The Bradford community is really massive
There are many communities that are all passive
All of them unite together
And will live with each other for forever and ever

Racism happens actually quite often
Where people are hurt to make them soften
They keep attacking with hurtful words
I would tell you them but they're too absurd

I have experienced lots of sadness
With bullying and lots of madness
Fighting, beating, even homicide
We might as well just call it genocide

But there is actually more to this place
Like the people who know it's not a disgrace
The community is pretty secure
Even though there are people who are unsure

Branden Horan (13)
Bradford Academy

A community

Always
Caring for
Others
Moving
Men and women
United
Never
Ill-treat
Till
Your life is done.

Emily Jackson-Wilson (13)
David Young Community Academy

Because we are one

On the way to my next destination
I hear screaming
I smell smoke
I see lawbreakers
VANDALISING
FIGHTING
DRUG DEALING
All that goes through my mind at that time is what disgraces to the nation
But all that doesn't matter
Because we are one
And we are united
In Bradford there are many
Different races
Different faces
Different backgrounds
At home the people speak different
Eat different
Think different
Live different
See different
They are different
But that doesn't matter to Bradford
Because Bradford is one
And it's proud

Kamran Khan (13)
Bradford Academy

Our community

Our community has all different types of people
 U and I are just the same
 Running and playing, trying to make friends
 Connecting together
 Old and young seeing the world together
 Making mistakes
 Making paper aeroplanes
 U and I are just the same
Nothing different to me and you, just our culture
In the dark where no one can see roaming around
 Together
 You and I are just the same

Chelsea Leach (12)
David Young Community Academy

Lots of people

There are lots of people in this community,
Different people,
Different cultures,
Different religions,
Different lifestyles.

There are lots of people in this community
Talking different languages,
Bonjour, hola, hello,
Trying to communicate,
Trying to understand.

There are lots of people in this community,
We don't look the same,
People are being bullied
For their looks and beliefs,
But we all have feelings.

There are lots of people in this community,
Trying to get along with each other,
Some are multilingual,
Some only monolingual.

There are lots of people in this community,
They all dress different,
Some have certain rules to follow,
Like covering your arms or covering your hair.

There are lots of people in this community,
From lots of different countries,
Poland, Spain, Australia, New Zealand
And more.

There are lots of people in this community,
Doing the same things,
Living their lives,
Trying to get along with each other,
Trying to work as one society.

There are lots of people in this community,
Different people,
Different cultures,
Different religions,
Different lifestyles.

Lauren Southwell (13)
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Leeds Met Press
Leeds Metropolitan University
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Tel: 0113 812 9257
Email: publications@leedsmet.ac.uk
www.leedsmet.ac.uk/publications

ISBN 978-1-907240-12-6
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